THE COUNCIL ON ALBERTA TEACHING STANDARDS

Year End Report

September 1987

Council on Alberta Teaching Standards

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August1986 - August 1987

Introduction

The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards continued meeting on a monthly basis throughout the period of August, 1986 to August, 1987. During that time the Council focused attention on four major areas including practice review, certification/de-certification, teacher excellence and teacher preparation. As a result, a number of initiatives in each of these areas were undertaken and a number of recommendations were made to the Minister.

Practice Review

In April, 1986 the Minister of Education circulated to stakeholder groups a draft of the proposed Practice Review of Teachers Regulation for the purpose of obtaining reaction and comment. Early in 1986-87 COATS examined the responses received by the Minister and redrafted particular sections of the proposed regulation where it was felt changes ought to be made. Concurrently, it drafted changes to the Practice Review of Teachers Procedures to reflect the changes made in the proposed regulation. In December, 1987 the proposed regulation and procedures were forwarded to the Minister with a recommendation that both be adopted for implementation.

While the Minister was considering the proposed Regulation, Gerry Heck, the chairman of the Council, Larry Rappel, the Executive Secretary of the Council, and Gary Johnson, Associate Director, Teacher Certification met with the executive representatives of the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Trustees' Association and the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents in independent meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to describe the proposed regulation and to discuss the involvement of each organization in the implementation of the proposed Regulation. In addition, presentations were made to zone meetings of CASS and

to some Regional Office staff members to describe the proposal presented to the Minister of Education and to solicit questions about the implementation of the Regulation.

Following approval of the Regulation by the Minister on April 28, 1987, more in-depth orientation sessions were conducted with CASS members and the professional staff of Alberta Education Regional Offices of Education. In addition, presentations were made to a number of members of the ASTA at a session held as part of the annual provincial ASTA conference and to local ATA presidents and executive members at their annual Banff workshop. Several other sessions will also be conducted with other groups of superintendents in zone meetings and with other staff of Alberta Education who have not yet participated in an orientation workshop. Additionally, COATS staff and members will be available to other public, teacher, administrative and trustee groups for orientation sessions in 1987-88. Printed materials distributed to participants in each of these sessions will supplement the oral and visual presentation. In addition, a brochure and a monograph on the new Regulation will be available to persons requesting written information.

Finally, administrative guidelines are also being prepared for review by the Council which are intended to provide direction to an investigating officer in the conduct of a preliminary inquiry or formal investigation associated with a practice review complaint.

Teacher Certification/De-certification

From August 1986 to August 1987, the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards was also very active in the area of preparing recommendations to the Minister on topics related to teacher certification. For example, the Council investigated the notion of a licensing authority which would assume responsibility for licensing persons with respect to the right to practice teaching. This body would also have the authority to remove that license. This licensing process would replace the current certification process, would occur after the completion of a university teacher preparation program and would be a distinct process of application and admittance to the profession. Though supportive of elements of the proposal, the Minister felt that such a change in

process as embodied in the proposed was untimely.

With respect to the portability of teacher certification agreements, the Minister agreed with the Council to pursue negotiations for bilateral agreements with other provinces. To this end, negotiations with Ontario produced a bilateral agreement on teacher certification which became effective May, 1987.

The Council also studied the implications of staffing vocational education programs in high schools in relation to a request by the Minister to provide a recommendation in regard to the further issuance of provisional certificates. The results of this study led the Council to recommend to the Minister that the program for the issuance of provisional certificates to vocational education teachers continue in its present form for an additional two (2) year period beyond the expiration of the present authority for issuing such certificates. This recommendation is currently under review by the Minister.

Another related area of interest to the Council was the study of the area of re-certification and teacher upgrading. A detailed proposal for an in-depth study of the upgrading currently undertaken by Alberta teachers was prepared and presented to the Minister. The Minister received the proposal with interest but felt that it should be considered at a more opportune time in the future.

COATS also investigated the certification area dealing with teachers possessing criminal convictions. The Council has not completed its investigation in this area and has, to date, made no recommendation to the Minister.

Recognition of Teacher Excellence

The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards continued to investigate the area of programs to recognize teacher excellence. The survey of such programs currently in use in the province was completed and revealed a multitude of local programs and a variety of views on the subject. The

Council, however, felt that a provincial program to recognize teacher excellence ought to be developed. Such a proposal was prepared and forwarded to the Minister in February, 1987. The Minister received the proposal favorably and asked for a detailed analysis of the proposal before giving it further consideration. The subcommittee of the Council on teacher excellence, prepared a detailed proposal and presented this proposal to the Council. The Council endorsed the proposal and forwarded it to the Minister. No decision has been made to date by the Minister on the proposal.

Teacher Preparation

The topic of teacher preparation programs was an additional focus of attention for the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards in 1986-1987. The Council prepared a discussion paper on the topic which described current regulation, policy and practice for the preparation of teachers in Alberta. The paper also sought reaction to the notion of a statement of ideals or philosophy being attached to a description of a teacher preparation program offered by any institution. Finally, the discussion paper presented a series of statements for discussion with respect to potential additional requirements or principles for defining a future program of teacher preparation in Alberta.

The purpose of the discussion paper was to obtain reactions from the Faculty of Education in each of Alberta's three universities and from each of the major stakeholder groups to the concepts contained in the paper. The method used to obtain these reactions was to forward a copy of the paper to each of these parties and to then extend an invitation to have the faculty or association's representatives present a reaction to the paper. Several of the groups have presently accepted this invitation and have provided a response to the discussion paper orally and, in some cases, in a written form as well. Other faculties of education or associations who have not yet accepted this invitation have indicated their intent to do so as soon as arrangements can be made in 1987-1988. The responses thus obtained from all groups presenting their views will be compiled for review by the Council prior to a recommendation being prepared and forwarded to the Minister.

Proposed COATS Activities for 1987-1988

A number of tasks initiated by COATS in its previous year of operation remain to be completed in 1987-1988. With respect to practice review, the Council will continue to conduct information and orientation sessions for stakeholder groups. The Council will also continue to prepare specific administrative guidelines for aspects of the operation of the Regulation and begin to train investigating officers in the conduct of preliminary inquiries or formal investigations associated with practice review complaints. In addition, the Council will continue to work with the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents and the Minister's office in preparing lists of teachers, superintendents and members of the public respectively for potential service on competency review panels or complainant appeal committees. Finally, the Council will prepare to administer any complaint it receives and expects to be fully operational in this regard by January, 1988.

Other tasks in progress referred to earlier include a recommendation to the Minister of a process for dealing with cases of teachers who incur criminal convictions and the presentation by remaining stakeholder groups of reactions to the Council's discussion paper on the preparation of teachers in Alberta. Both of these tasks will require a considerable amount of time and energy in 1987-1988 prior to being completed. Additionally, the Council may be requested to undertake others activities in relation to its recommendation to the Minister regarding a program to recognize teacher excellence. Finally, it is expected that COATS may be requested to prepare recommendations to the Minister on certification topics such as the granting of professional degrees in education by private colleges and the continuance of the ECS Diploma. As well as tasks in progress, the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards has aspects of its mandate yet to address and intends to begin study in the areas of teacher evaluation and professional development in the coming year. Both areas have not been addressed in any depth as yet by the Council but may receive more attention in 1987-1988.

Finally, the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards developed a communication strategy in 1986-1987 which it has begun to implement and will accelerate in 1987-88. A number of

avenues of communication will be used to inform interested persons of the process for practice review of teachers including a brochure and monograph. Additionally, the chairman of the Council may accept invitations to appear on radio or television shows. Other Council members will also be prepared to accept an invitation from groups with an interest in obtaining more detail on the practice review process. The Council desires to raise its profile with respect to other activities in its mandate and will actively seek to do so using those aspects of its communication strategy developed for this purpose.

Respectfully,

Gerry Heck Chairman
Council on Alberta Teaching Standards

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